

December 18, 2006

This document is in response to a student that wrote to the School Board Members regarding the unblocking of a website called "LiveJournal." Please see the explanation below as to why certain websites must be blocked.

In compliance with emerging Federal law, notably the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), and in keeping with the spirit of Board Policy 5306, the District deployed content filtering in the Internet delivery systems for the District's schools and departments. The technology employed provides the District's students, staff, and administrators the ability to access a wide variety of educational and administratively informative web sites – while restricting access in inappropriate material.

The CIPA law requires:

- Schools and libraries subject to CIPA must certify that they have an Internet safety policy and technology protection measures in place. An Internet safety policy must include technology protection measures to block or filter Internet access to pictures that: (a) are obscene, (b) are child pornography, or (c) are harmful to minors, for computers that are accessed by minors.
- Schools subject to CIPA are required to adopt and enforce a policy to monitor online activities of minors; and
- Schools and libraries subject to CIPA are required to adopt and implement a policy addressing: (a) access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet; (b) the safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications; (c) unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking," and other unlawful activities by minors online; (d) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors; and (e) restricting minors' access to materials harmful to them.

LiveJournal.com is categorized as an "Online Community". The LiveJournal website states that it is *"a simple-to-use communication tool that lets you express yourself and connect with friends online. You can use LiveJournal in many different ways: as a private journal, a blog, a social network and much more."* Other websites in this category include Myspace.com and Snapvine.com. **The "Online Community" category is blocked since there is the possibility of "unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors."** Furthermore, it would provide a direct electronic means of communications between a minor and anyone on the Internet.

While there may be sections of the LiveJournal website that are useful and possibly "harmless", allowing access to this site for the 270,000<sup>+</sup> students in Broward County could potentially expose children to inappropriate content and contact by unknown persons. Thus, this site and other "online community" sites must remain on the restricted list of websites available in Broward County schools.